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Promotion and protection of all human rights, civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights, including the right to development

Note verbale dated 22 March 2017 from the Permanent Mission of Singapore to the United Nations Office and other international organizations in Geneva addressed to the secretariat of the Human Rights Council

The Permanent Mission of the Republic of Singapore to the United Nations Office and other international organizations in Geneva presents its compliments to the secretariat of the Human Rights Council and has the honour to refer to the joint statement that was delivered at the biennial high-level panel discussion on the question of the death penalty, held during the thirty-fourth session of the Council on 1 March 2017.

The Permanent Mission has the further honour to request on behalf of the Permanent Missions of the Commonwealth of the Bahamas, the Kingdom of Bahrain, the People's Republic of Bangladesh, Barbados, Brunei Darussalam, the People's Republic of China, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, the Arab Republic of Egypt, the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, India, the Republic of Indonesia, the Islamic Republic of Iran, the Republic of Iraq, Jamaica, the State of Kuwait, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Malaysia, the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, the Sultanate of Oman, the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, the State of Qatar, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, the Republic of Singapore, the Republic of the Sudan, the Republic of Uganda, the United Arab Emirates and the Republic of Yemen that the present note verbale and its annex* be circulated as a document of the thirty-fourth session of the Human Rights Council.

* Reproduced as received, in the language of submission only.

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Annex to the note verbale dated 22 March 2017 from the Permanent Mission of Singapore to the United Nations Office and other international organizations in Geneva addressed to the secretariat of the Human Rights Council

Joint statement at the biennial high-level panel discussion on the question of the death penalty on 1 March 2017, at the thirty-fourth session of the Human Rights Council

Mr President,

I have the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of a group of 27 countries.

Ensuring our people's fundamental human right to safety and security is of paramount importance to us. Our view is that the rights of the offenders must always be weighed against the rights of their victims and their families, and the broader rights of the community and society to be able to live in peace and security. For many countries, the death penalty remains an important component of their criminal justice system and deterrent against what their societies regard as the most serious crimes.

The death penalty is only applied after adhering to the full due process of law, pursuant to a final judgment rendered by a competent court, and with the right to seek pardon or appeal for commutation.

There is no international consensus for or against the death penalty when imposed according to the due process of the law. This has repeatedly been affirmed by the votes on past UNGA resolutions on the death penalty. As reported by the UNSG in 2015, the death penalty remains lawful in 97 countries and territories.

There is also no international consensus that the death penalty, when applied in accordance with due process of law and judicial safeguards, violates the prohibition against torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.

Diversity of States and the right of States to exercise their sovereignty in pursuit of their people's welfare are recognized principles, including in the UN. Every State thus has the inalienable sovereign right to choose its legal and criminal justice systems, without interference by other States. The adoption of OP1 in the 71st UNGA resolution "Moratorium on the use of the death penalty" clearly and explicitly reaffirms the sovereign right of all countries to develop their own legal system.

The issue of capital punishment and the types of crimes for which the death penalty is applied to, is therefore a question that every State has the sovereign right to decide for itself, taking into account its own circumstances.

Thank you Mr President.

List of co-sponsors

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2. Kingdom of Bahrain
3. People's Republic of Bangladesh
4. Barbados
5. Brunei Darussalam
6. People's Republic of China
7. Democratic People's Republic of Korea
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